

Overarching Principles for maintaining the National Immunisation Programme during the COVID-19 Pandemic

“The two public health interventions that have had the greatest impact on the world’s health are clean water and vaccines.” (WHO)

The UK advice is that childhood vaccination, **should continue** during this time, see Public [Health](#) England and [public health Wales](#). [The Royal College of General Practitioners](#) has also issued guidance that immunisations should continue regardless of the scale of the virus outbreak.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) have warned that disruption to immunisation programmes during a pandemic can result in an increase in vaccine preventable diseases making continuing to immunise children even more important ([WHO, 2020](#)).

We know from experience that falls in immunisation rates lead to increases in cases of vaccine preventable diseases and deaths.

Top Tips	
1.	<p>Explain to families that they should not attend if they or any member of the household is in self isolation. This could be because they are known to have COVID-19, they have any of the symptoms of COVID-19, particularly a new persistent cough or a high temperature.</p> <p>They should get in touch when their period of isolation ends.</p>
2.	<p>Parents will understandably be anxious to attend the surgery when they have been advised to stay at home. Acknowledge the parent/ carers concerns around exposure to COVID 19 when attending for immunisation</p> <p>Provide guidance to parents/carers on why it is important to continue the National Immunisation Programme during the pandemic.</p>
3.	<p>Provide guidance to colleagues and reception staff on the importance of maintaining the national immunisation programme during the pandemic including clear messages to be given to patients / carers that immunisations are still important, should they contact the practice.</p>
3.	<p>Consider telephone consultation with parents to complete as much of the pre-immunisation discussion, discuss consent, and give post-immunisation advice prior to the patient attending the practice. Consider sending out information to parents in advance by text or email.</p>
4.	<p>Provide guidance to parents/ carers on what you are doing to keep them safe whilst attending for vaccination (including any PPE, surgery access and cleaning programmes) including assuring them that the Practice has a social distancing policy.</p>
5.	<p>Ensure all data is recorded on the patients record. Advise parents to bring their red books, but the parents may need to complete them. If they are only partially completed at the time, arrangements should be made for them to be completed later or a printout sent to the parents to put in the red book.</p>

6.	<p>Provide additional guidance to the parents/carers in relation to COVID 19 concerns as part of the post immunisation advice.</p> <p>A temperature is normal after vaccination, see what to expect after vaccination, however, if an infant still has a fever 48 hours after vaccination or if parents are concerned about their infant's health at any time, they should seek advice from their GP or NHS 111.</p> <p>Reinforce to the parents that if they decide to not have their child vaccinated, it is ultimately their decision, but that their child will remain vulnerable to diseases.</p>
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Resources to support practice:

[PHE Vaccine Update March 2020](#)

[RCGP policy guidance on priorities for primary care](#)

[Immunisation against infectious disease \(The green book\)](#)

[UK immunisation schedule](#)

[UK Algorithm for incomplete or uncertain immunisation Schedule](#)

[NHS Fever in children](#)

[RCN medicines management PGDs and PSDs](#)

[Specialist Pharmacy Services \(SPS\) Q&A to support the use of PGDs in primary care networks](#)

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